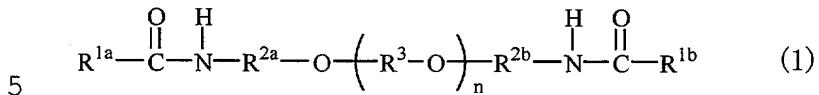


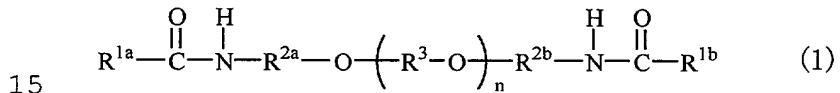
Claims

1. A composition for external application, which comprises a diamide derivative represented by the following formula (1):



(wherein, R^{1a} and R^{1b} are the same or different and each represents a C_{1-23} hydrocarbon group, R^{2a} and R^{2b} are the same or different and each represents a divalent C_{1-6} hydrocarbon group, R^3 s are the same or different and each represents a divalent C_{2-6} hydrocarbon group and n stands for 1 to 100).

10 2. A composition for external application, which comprises a diamide derivative represented by the following formula (1):

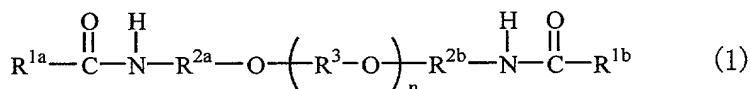


(wherein, R^{1a} and R^{1b} are the same or different and each represents a C_{1-23} hydrocarbon group, R^{2a} and R^{2b} are the same or different and each represents a divalent C_{1-6} hydrocarbon group, R^3 s are the same or different and each represents a divalent C_{2-6} hydrocarbon group and n stands for 1 to 100) and an intercellular lipid component of the horny layer.

3. A composition for external application according to claim 2, wherein the intercellular lipid component of the horny layer is at least one selected from ceramides, pseudoceramids, sphingoglycolipids, sphingophospholipids, 5 sphingosines and derivatives thereof, sphinganines and derivatives thereof, higher fatty acids, and sterols and derivatives thereof.

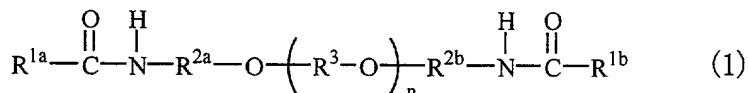
4. A composition for external application according to any one of claims 1 to 3, which is a cosmetic 10 composition.

5. A humectant, which comprises, as an effective ingredient, a diamide derivative represented by the following formula (1):



15 (wherein, R^{1a} and R^{1b} are the same or different and each represents a C_{1-23} hydrocarbon group, R^{2a} and R^{2b} are the same or different and each represents a divalent C_{1-6} hydrocarbon group, R^3 s are the same or different and each represents a divalent C_{2-6} hydrocarbon group and n stands 20 for 1 to 100).

6. A skin barrier function reinforcing agent, which comprises, as an effective ingredient, a diamide derivative represented by the following formula (1):



(wherein, R^{1a} and R^{1b} are the same or different and each represents a C_{1-23} hydrocarbon group, R^{2a} and R^{2b} are the same or different and each represents a divalent C_{1-6}

5 hydrocarbon group, R^3 's are the same or different and each represents a divalent C_{2-6} hydrocarbon group and n stands for 1 to 100).

7. A method for reinforcing the water retaining ability of the horny layer, which comprises applying, to
10 the skin, an effective amount of a diamide derivative as claimed in claim 1.

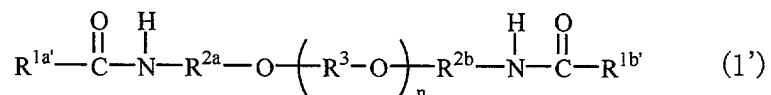
8. A method for reinforcing skin barrier functions, which comprises applying, to the skin, an effective amount of a diamide derivative as claimed in claim 1.

15 9. A method for remedying excessive hair dryness or improving touch feel of the hair, which comprises applying, to the hair, an effective amount of a diamide derivative as claimed in claim 1.

10. Use of a diamide derivative as claimed in claim
20 1 for the preparation of a composition for external application.

11. Use according to claim 10, wherein the composition for external application serves as cosmetics.

12. A diamide derivative represented by the following formula (1'):



(wherein, $\text{R}^{1a'}$ and $\text{R}^{1b'}$ are the same or different and each represents a branched C_{4-23} hydrocarbon group, R^{2a} and R^{2b} are the same or different and each represents a divalent C_{1-6} hydrocarbon group, R^3 's are the same or different and each represents a divalent C_{2-6} hydrocarbon group and n stands for 1 to 100).

10 13. A diamide derivative according to Claim 12, wherein $\text{R}^{1a'}$ and $\text{R}^{1b'}$ each represents a branched C_{5-17} alkyl group, R^{2a} and R^{2b} each represents a C_{2-6} alkylene group, R^3 represents a C_{2-6} alkylene group and n stands for 1 to 10.

14. A diamide derivative according to claim 12,
15 which is represented by the following formula (C):

